

Emerging Trends of Urbanization in India: Environmental Perspectives

Dr.Mahendrababu Dhulipudi
Mangalagiri, Guntur, Andhra Pradesh

Abstract-The process of urbanization historically has been connected with other important economic and social transformations, which have brought greater geographic mobility¹, lower fertility, longer life expectancy and population aging. Cities are important drivers of development and poverty reduction in both urban and rural areas. The process of urbanization in India could not be explained fully by the process of economic development, it is positively linked with the latter. The rapid increase in urbanization and economic development has led to severe environmental degradation that undermines the environmental resource base upon which sustainable development depends. The growing concern is that as cities grow larger environmental stress multiplies. This is because cities are where action is. The unprecedented growth in population, accompanied by technological and economic growth has enhanced urbanization. Cities are the focal points of opportunities. Hence there is always a movement of population to cities. This increases the pressure on existing facilities of housing and infrastructural facilities besides leading to congestion. Thus, the situation in our cities has become unmanageable and more alarming with the growing inequalities arising out of logs in adjustment to rapid and extensive urbanization. A great many 'urban' dwellers and individual households are not integrated socially, economically or politically in urban life. This paper analyses the emerging trends of urbanization in India an environmental perspective.

Keywords: Urbanization, Geographic, Environmental, Growth, Resource.

INTRODUCTION

The study of urbanization and environment has evinced interest from a wide range of experts. The multidisciplinary gamut of the subject invokes the interest from ecologists to urban planners and civil engineers, to sociologists, to administrators and policy makers, and finally the common man. This is because of the multitude of activities and processes that take place in the urban ecosystems every day. Urbanization is an ongoing phenomenon. It is the movement of population from rural to urban areas and efforts to reduce time and expense in commuting and

transportation while improving opportunities for jobs, education, housing, and transportation. Living in cities permits individuals and families to take advantage of the opportunities of proximity, diversity, and marketplace competition. Urban ecosystems are the consequence of the intrinsic nature of humans as social beings to live together. Thus when the early humans evolved they settled on the banks of the rivers that dawned the advent of civilisations. An inadvertent increase in the population complimented with creativity, humans were able to invent wheel and fire, created settlements and started lived in forests too. Gradually, with the development of their communication skills by the form of languages through speech and script, the humans effectively utilised this to make enormous progress in their life styles. All this eventually led to the initial human settlements into villages, towns and then into cities. In the process humans now live in complex ecosystems called urban ecosystems.

REVIEW OF LITERATURE

Dewaram A. Nagdeve (2006) in his paper entitled "Population, Poverty and Environment in India" examined the relationship of population to the environment and with growing population, poverty and urbanization, the environment is degrading. The study reveals that the country's population growth is imposing an increasing burden on the country's limited and continually degrading natural resource base. The natural resources are under increasing strain, even though the majority of people survive at subsistence level. Population pressure on arable land contributes to the land degradation. The increasing population numbers and growing affluence have already resulted in rapid growth of energy production and consumption in India. The environmental effects like ground water and surface water contamination; air pollution and global warming are of growing concern owing to

increasing consumption levels.

Neha Madhiwalla (2007) in her article “Healthcare in Urban Slums in India” has analysed that the growth of cities has always been accompanied by the growth of slums. The industrial revolution in Western Europe led to the migration of people to slums in cities which created new conditions of ill health due to overcrowding, poor housing and unsanitary environment, coupled with poverty. While public health crisis were not unknown in earlier times, the institutions of family and church were primarily responsible for care and relief.

Martin Medina (2010) in his study “Solid Wastes, Poverty and the Environment in Developing Country Cities: Challenges and Opportunities” observed that many cities in Africa, Asia, and Latin America face serious problems managing their wastes. Two of the major problems are the insufficient collection and inappropriate final disposal of wastes. Despite spending increasing resources, many cities – particularly in Africa and Asia – collect less than half of the waste generated. Most wastes are disposed of in open dumps, deposited on vacant land, or burned by residents in their backyards. Insufficient collection and inadequate disposal generate significant pollution problems and risks to human health and the environment. Over one billion people living in low income communities and slums lack appropriate waste management services. Given the rapid population growth and urbanization in many cities, the management of wastes tends to further deteriorate. Thus, this paper examines the challenges and opportunities in this regard.

OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY

In this background our objectives in this study are primarily to examine the challenges of Urbanization and Environment in India which are unprecedented in scale and significance. Within the framework of this broad objective the specific objectives set out for this study are as follows:

1. To analyses the patterns of urbanization in pre and post reform periods.
2. To examine the impact of growing urbanization on the overall quality of human life.
3. To examine the impact of urbanization on environmental factors.
4. To highlight on policy issues of Environment.

METHODOLOGY

The study is based on data collected from secondary sources which include various publications by government agencies as well as non-governmental organizations/bodies. The data from various NSSO rounds and various Censuses (Registrar General of India) has been used for the collection of relevant and reliable statistics. Apart from this various issues of Economic Survey, different volumes of statistical outlines of India and various reports of CMIE published from time to time has also been the other source of data collection.

URBANIZATION TRENDS IN INDIA

India has been experiencing a steady increase in the share of its urban population. In India out of total population of 1210.2 million in 2011. In that 377.1 million are in urban areas. An increase of 91.1 million persons to urban population during 2001- 2011 is not only the highest registered thus far it is also higher than the increase of 90 million persons in rural population. The annual exponential growth rate of 2.76 percent registered during 2001-2011 has reversed the declining trend observed during 1981- 91 and 1991-2001. The rise in the urban population growth rate has come during an era of sharp decline in the natural growth rate. It shows that the push to urban population has come in from other sources, i.e., Rural to urban conversion and rural-urban migration. Urbanization in India has occurred more slowly than in other developing countries. Among all the states of India, Goa is now the most urbanized state with 62.2 percent urban Population, a significant increase since 2001. Among the North-Eastern States, Mizoram is most urbanized with 51.5 percent urban population. Among major states, Tamil Nadu continues to be the most urbanized state with 48.4 percent of the population living in urban areas followed by Kerala (47.7 percent) and Maharashtra (45.2 percent). Among all the Union Territories, the National Capital Territory of Delhi and the Union territory of Chandigarh are the most urbanized with 97.5 percent and 97.25 percent urban population respectively. The pattern of urbanization in India is characterized by a continuous concentration of population and activities in large cities.

UNBALANCED URBANIZATION- ENVIRONMENTAL IMPLICATIONS

The consequences are more severe as the process of urbanization is going a pace without having commensurate growth in industrialization and the rise in the level of overall economic development. Unplanned urban growth, for instance causes growth of slums and squatter settlements, varying affects on environmental degradation and increased burden on existing infrastructure. It should be noted that urban growth has a number of positive impacts on the environment and human well-being, i.e. higher population densities may lower per capita costs of providing energy, health care, infrastructure and services. Also, urbanization has historically been associated with declining birth rates, which reduces population pressure on land and natural resources. Despite all these positive impacts, almost all major cities of the region are increasingly plagued by environmental problems.

As a direct result of urbanization, great threat to health and safety in cities comes from water and air pollution, especially at the households and community levels. While ambient air pollution impairs the health of almost all urban residents in many cities, indoor air pollution is particularly hazardous for women and children of low-income households who are regularly exposed to higher concentrations of air pollutants from cooking and heating sources in poorly-ventilated housing. Waterborne diseases are found most commonly in low-income neighbourhoods as a result of inadequate sanitation, drainage and solid waste collection services. Health risks, especially to the poor, are also posed by pesticides and industrial effluents. The productivity of many cities is adversely affected by traffic congestion and water pollution. The loss in productivity includes the total productive time wasted in traffic and the associated increase in the costs of operating and maintaining vehicles. The rising costs of treating polluted water for industrial and domestic purposes are damaging the productivity of urban economies. Fisheries are also being severely harmed by water pollution. Uncollected and improperly handled solid waste can have serious health consequences. They block drainage systems and contaminate groundwater at landfill sites. In many cities, particularly those in Pacific Island countries; it

is difficult to secure land for waste disposal facilities, especially onshore landfill sites. Most cities in the region are also unable to manage the increasing amounts of hazardous wastes generated by rapid industrialization. Another problem which occurs from industrialization is increasing emission of CO₂, CO and other harmful GHG. Conversion of agricultural land and forest, as well as reclaiming of wetlands, for urban uses and infrastructure, is associated with widespread removal of vegetation to support urban ecosystem and put additional pressure on nearby areas that may be even more ecologically sensitive. Groundwater overdraft has led to land subsidence and a higher frequency of flooding, particularly in the lowest-lying and poorest areas.

REFERENCE

- [1] United Nations Human Settlements Programme (U.N.-Habitat), State of the World's Cities 2008/2009: Harmonious Cities (London: Earthscan, 2008), pp. 6, 11-12, 15
- [2] Ahluwalia, Montek (2011): "Prospects and Policy Challenges in the Twelfth Plan", Economic & Political Weekly, 46(21): 88-105.
2. Bhagat, R B (2011): "Emerging Pattern of Urbanization in India", Economic & Political Weekly, August 20, 2011, VOL- VLV, No 34.
- [3] <http://censusindia.gov.in/>
- [4] <http://envfor.nic.in/>
- [5] Ramachandran, R. (1992): "Urbanization and Urban System in India", Oxford University Press, New Delhi.
- [6] Kundu, A. (1994): "Pattern of Urbanization with special reference to Small and Medium Towns in India", in G. K. Chandra (ed) Sectoral Issues in Indian Economy, Har Anand publications, New Delhi.